

In the Claims:

1-15 (Cancelled)

16. (Previously amended) A contact center comprising;

a local area network; and

a first and at least a second switching apparatus for connecting to at least one public network, said first and at least said second switching apparatus being configured to communicate over said local area network and arranged to communicate with each other over said local area network, wherein each switching apparatus includes:

a first point of interface T coupling a number of incoming trunks;

a second point of interface S coupling a number of agent stations;

a third point of interface R coupling a number of call processing resources; and

a fourth point of interface B coupling only a number of broadband connections reserved for connecting one switching apparatus to another, wherein the number of broadband connections is greater than or equal to the number of incoming

trunks plus the number of agent stations.

17. (Previously amended) The contact center as claimed in claim 16 wherein interface T includes PSTN.

18. (Previously amended) The contact center as claimed in claim 16 wherein interface T includes internet telephony.

19. (Previously amended) The contact center as claimed in claim 16 wherein interface R includes conference, recording, and playback resources.

20. (Previously amended) The contact center as claimed in claim 16 wherein said switching apparatus includes time division multiplexing.

21. (Previously amended) The contact center as claimed in claim 20 wherein a number of time slots is set such that said contact center is linearly expandable and the switching channels in an additional, newly added switching apparatus are all utilized for call switching rather than interfacing with other switching

apparatus.

22. (Previously amended) The contact center as claimed in claim 21 wherein a number of time slots equals the number of incoming trunks plus the number agent station plus the number of call processing resources plus the number of broadband connections.

23. (Previously amended) The contact center as claimed in claim 20 wherein the number of incoming trunks, the number agent station, the number of call processing resources, and the number of broadband connections are set for a given number of timeslots such that said contact center is linearly expandable and the switching channels in an additional, newly added switching apparatus are all utilized for call switching rather than interfacing with other switching apparatus.

24. (Previously amended) The contact center as claimed in claim 16 wherein a plurality of connections to agent stations are connected to said switching apparatuses through a legacy PBX.

25. (Previously amended) The contact center as claimed in

claim 16 wherein contact center includes N switching apparatus, M backup switching apparatus, and means for detecting when one of said N switching apparatus is faulty and for rerouting channels normally serviced by said faulty N switching apparatus to said backup M switching apparatus for service, said backup M apparatus being configured to service any of said faulty N switching apparatus which is detected as failing.

26. (Previously amended) The contact center as claimed in claim 25 wherein M equals one.

27. (Previously amended) The contact center as claimed in claim 25 wherein M is less than N.